



NEWS RELEASE

IDAHO WATER RESOURCE BOARD

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Water Board Authorizes Aquifer Recharge Project

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The Idaho Water Resource Board passed a resolution Tuesday authorizing \$300,000 in funding for the State's first constructed aquifer recharge project. The site is located on state land east of Wendell along the W Canal of the North Side Canal Company system. The money authorized by the Board comes from a special fund created earlier this year by the Legislature for water projects. The funds amount to about half the cost of the entire project. Another \$250,000 will come in the form of a grant from the Bureau of Reclamation and the rest will come from other sources. When the project is finished as early as next irrigation season, water will be diverted from the canal into a series of natural depressions and allowed to seep into the soil, recharging a portion of the East Snake Plain Aquifer. As much as 10,000 acre-feet of water will be diverted each year to the recharge site before, and after the irrigation season.

Other action taken by the Board during its Twin Falls meeting included passing a resolution authorizing placing 60,000 acre-feet of the Bell Rapids water rights into the Water Supply Bank. That allows the Bureau of Reclamation to lease that water for Endangered Species Act purposes. The Board, the Bureau, and the Idaho Department of Water Resources have all signed an agreement making that water available to the Bureau for the next 30-years. The Board bought the Bell Rapids water on behalf of the State earlier this year.

The Board also approved a pair of one-year loans to the Preston Whitney Irrigation Company and the Preston Whitney Reservoir Company. The loans total \$575,000 and will be used to install a pressurized irrigation system and to retrofit reservoirs to provide the water. The companies have obtained a federal grant, which they will use to pay back the loan. Both operate in the Bear River Basin near the town of Preston.

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A resolution involving Tamarack Resort was postponed. The North Lake Water and Sewer District wants to buy and operate Tamarack Resort's newly constructed water system using Board issued revenue bonds. The Board delayed action until it receives more information about the details of the agreement between Tamarack and the Water and Sewer District.

The Board also went into Executive Session to discuss details of a proposed settlement agreement with the Shoshoni-Paiute Indian Tribe regarding the Tribe's water right claims on the Duck Valley Reservation.

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